2:Gamble S-5 (1926-1933) 1954 -AF12 North China AF12

776 794 Another group of gods who are neither Buddhist, Taoist, nor Official can best be classified as the gods of individual cults. They are generally polytheistic in nature. Such gods are the Ch'ung Wang, god of the insects, Ma Wang, god of the horses, Ho Shen, god of the river, and others of a similar nature.

When a temple is classified as Buddhist, Taoist, Official, or as belonging to one of the individual cults, it means that the principal deity belongs to that group. The lesser gods of the temple may, and often do, belong to one of the other groups. The Buddhist Kuan Yin and the Official Kuan Ti are found on the side altars of many temples dedicated to other deities.

795 779 Through the years Buddhism, Taoism, and the Official and individual cults have influenced each other, borrowed from each other, and imitated each other as one or the other has gained in popularity, prestige, and power until now, in some cases, it is difficult to decide the group to which some of the temples belong.

Several examples will perhaps illustrate how the different groups have intermingled and influenced each other. The origin of the dragon is pre-Buddhist as it goes back to very early days, but it is the Buddhists who have personalized the dragons and the dragon mother. We have included the dragons in the Official list because of their official function in controlling the rain. The Ch'eng Huang has long been the official protector of the city walls, but under the Manchu dynasty the deceased official whose spirit was to occupy that position for three years was nominated by the Taoist pope. At the end of his term the Ch'eng Huang might be renominated or replaced. The Buddhists claim that Yü Huang, the chief god of the Taoist trinity, is their god Yü Ti, stolen by the Taoists. The head Taoist priest in Ting Hsien lived in the city Ch'eng Huang temple. There used to be one temple, T'ien Chen Szu, that combined Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, and Mohammedanism so that any sect could come there to worship.

The Buddhist and Taoist temples did not appear to have any close connection with a central organization or governing body as is true of religious sects in most Western countries. The temples seemed to be relatively independent units. Most of them had been erected by the people living in the village. The building was financed sometimes by popular subscription, sometimes from official village funds, occasionally by an individual who had acquired wealth and wanted to

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do something for his native village. When built, the temple was dedicated to the deity who offered the type of protection the people felt they needed or who personified the characteristics they honored and revered. Most of the temples were looked after by the village people. Priests were in attendance only for special services. These priests had had, of course, the official Buddhist or Taoist training.

It must also be remembered that generally most of the Chinese do not feel the exclusiveness about their religion that often is felt by those trained in the traditions of Western countries. They can believe in both Buddhist and Taoist teachings and can worship in any of the temples if the deities have the attributes they desire to worship or are able to give the sort of help they need. One writer says that this is due to the fact that a popular religion has developed that has borrowed from Buddhism, Taoism, and the Official cult but is distinct from them and must be regarded as a separate system.

If the 855 village temples are grouped according to the connection of the principal deity, there were 345 Taoist, 223 Official, 215 Buddhist, 54 belonging to individual cults, and 18 that must be classed as miscellaneous as they were dedicated to all the gods or else their name, such as Big Temple, did not indicate their connection. The percentage division was 41 per cent Taoist, 26 per cent Official, 25 per cent Buddhist, 6 per cent Individual, and 2 per cent miscellaneous. In the Experimental District the division was very similar—45 per cent Taoist, 24 per cent Official, 23 per cent Buddhist, and 8 per cent Individual.

The principal Taoist deities, judging from the number of temples dedicated to them, were the Wu Tao, gods of the five elements, with 157 temples; the San Kuan, the three rulers of heaven, earth, and water; the Niang Niangs, a group of female deities who grant children, protect the eyes, etc.; Chen Wu, who alone among men is perfection itself; Yü Huang, the Jade or Pearly Emperor, the supreme god of the Taoist pantheon. Forty-five per cent of the Taoist temples were Wu Tao Miao; 91 per cent were dedicated to the above five groups of deities.

Kuan Yü, the Chinese god of war and also one of the gods of literature, was by far the most popular of the Official gods. He was the chief or one of the chief gods in 148, two-thirds, of the Official Temples. The dragons had 45 temples dedicated to them in Ting Hsien. These two groups included 86 per cent of the Official temples.

In 91 per cent of the Buddhist temples the chief deity was one of the

6:Young et. al. E-5 (1928-1929) 1930 AF12 North China AF12

100 was steadily maintained. 797

About 1925 a new pastor replaced the old one who had been so succesful in gaining the confidence of the townspeople. The new man was not so successful and at same time Presbyterian Churches adopted a policy of self-help for their rural churches. The people as a whole are very poor, and were not sufficiently interested to give the necessary help, so the church gradually closed down its services and school.

4. Chinese Temples

There are altogether ten temples in the town, five 795 in the northern section, and five in the southern. All of the them are inactive, and there is only one monk who lives in a small room, and watches one of the temples. The large number of temples, and their rich ornament, now decaying, give us an idea of their power and prestige in the past history of China.

At present the two largest temples are being 346 utilised by the school and the self-government associa- 178 tion. In most cases in China it will be found that the temples are the only public buildings which are available to serve the needs of the institutions necessary for the life of the town, and everywhere one finds old temples which in the past had tremendous power in the lives of the people, being used to house schools and public offices. Then we see the decay of 779 the temples and the lack of interest on the part of the 178 people it seems as if Buddhism is tottering, and that left to itself it will gradually die as a power in the peoples' lives, but the drastic measures taken by the